Rail link to Shirdi

†1148. SHRIMATI SAVITA SHARDA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have any proposal to link Shirdi Ashram through railway line keeping in view the large number of devotees who visit this place every year;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) by when Shirdi pilgrimage is likely to be linked through railways?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The construction of new line from Puntamba-Shirdi (16.6 kms) at an approx. cost of Rs. 48.78 crore is in progress.

(c) No target date has yet been fixed.

Pending railway projects in Punjab and Maharashtra

1149. SHRI DARA SINGH: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the State Governments of Punjab and Maharashtra have requested Central Government for any new train connections and expeditious disposal of pending railway projects in those States:

(b) if so, the details of pending railway projects/new railway lines, State-wise; and

(c) the action Government have taken or propose to take to avoid delay?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS , (SHRI R. VELU): (a) Yes, Sir. Chief Minister of Maharashtra has requested for train between Mumbai-Patna *via* Jaunpur. This has not been found feasible due to operational and resource constraints.

(b) Required information given in the Statement I & II (See below).

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.